

Objective: to understand *what* “holiness” is and *why* it is important to us as Christians.

Note: You will need a Soularium and *Satisfied* booklets for everyone in your study.

**Launch (5 min):** We will be using the next 4 bible studies to explore the concept of “holiness” and what that means for Christians. However, “holiness” is not a concept or a word that we use (or appreciate) very much in our culture.

From Soularium, pick out pictures 18 (Light in darkness), 43 (man standing in subway), 07 (single in between couples), 30 (wedding dress), 05 (Mountain lake), 27 (black and white pew)

Which picture do you think best describes “holiness”, why?

We will be looking at 1 Peter 1:13-25, where Peter is writing to Christians who were isolated and scattered throughout modern day Turkey and who were suffering great persecution in the hands of the Roman empire and its citizens.

Our passage in v.13 starts off with a “Therefore”, which refers back to something previously mentioned as the basis for what comes next. In this case it is all of vv. 3-12, where Peter is reminding the suffering Christians that God has chosen them, and has promised them eternal salvation.

Read 1 Peter 1:13-25 (Note: the NLT translation is particularly helpful. You can read it here: <http://biblia.com/books/nlt/1Pe1.8>)

## Observation:

What stands out to you about this passage?

**What is confusing about this passage?** (*You don't need to answer all questions here, as they will be answered throughout. The idea is just to get a feel of what parts need attention. You can say, "That's a good question, we'll come back to that." Or "That's a good question. We won't be covering that tonight, but we can talk about it later if you want."*)

**While vv. 3-12 are full of statements about what is true of Christians. Vv. 13-25 are full of instructions. List off all the commands you see in vv. 13-25.** (*Prepare your minds for action (v.13), keep sober in spirit (v. 13), fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you (v. 13), do not be conformed to the former lusts (v.14), be holy yourselves (v. 15), conduct yourselves in fear during your stay on earth (v. 17), fervently love one another from the heart (v. 22).*)

**In light of these observations, what would you say is the main idea of this passage?** (*Because of everything God has done for us, there must be a corresponding change in our lives, namely to live “holy lives”.*)

## Interpretation

**There are 4 main reasons given for us to “be holy”. We will look at each individually.**

### **Re-read vv. 14-16**

**What does it mean that God is holy?** (*Simply put: God is perfect in every way and unlike us or anything we know. More in depth: As a divine being he is completely separate from the physical world we live in. Moreover, he is*

*morally perfect in His character and therefore set apart from all humans and all other spiritual beings. The focus is on His perfection and His absolute uniqueness. It makes Him worthy of our worship (our appreciation and love of Him above all things - Rev 4:5-11) and it makes Him unapproachable to us without our sin being removed – Isaiah 6:1-6.)*

**What does it mean for a Christian to be holy?**  
*(Simply put: to be chosen and set apart by God and to imitate Him in my character. More in depth: In relationship to God – Jesus has taken all our sins away, and made us perfect, or “holy” in God’s sight. In relationship to our earthly life, it is to imitate God’s moral character. It has a connotation of being “set apart” or selected out of a former existence for a special purpose. 2 Timothy 2:20-22. There is more meaning given as we look at the rest of the passage.)*

**What is the reasoning given to be holy in vv. 15-16?** *(God is Holy. He is our father, and has adopted us as His children, therefore we should imitate Him.)*

**Do you think vv. 14-16 is motivating to live a holy life? Why or why not?** *(It can be hard to relate, or just feel like an overwhelming burden. But if you have a good earthly father, you would be proud to imitate him and identify yourself as part of his family.)*

**Re-read vv. 17-19.**

**What does it mean to “conduct yourselves in fear” in v. 17?** *(To behave in a way as to constantly take into account that God is our Father and our Judge. You could say the result of conducting ourselves in this way would be holy living.)*

**In v. 18 it says believers are “redeemed”.**

**What does it mean to “redeem” something?**  
*(It is originally taken from slave culture of the time. A slave was “owned” by his master, but he or someone else could purchase his freedom for a price. This was called “redemption”, and the slaved would be “redeemed”.*

**What are believers redeemed from?** *(our “futile” way of life (v. 17), i.e. the helplessness, and hopelessness of slavery to sin.)*

**What was the cost of that redemption?** *(the precious blood of an “unblemished lamb”, the blood of Jesus Christ.)*

**Summarize the reasoning given in vv. 17-19 for holy living?** *(To give an account of my life to a judge is a sobering fact; also, to know that I am precious to God the Father, that He paid an infinite price to purchase me out of my sin and give me a new purpose and meaning greater than sin & selfish living.)*

**Do you think this is motivating? Why or why not?**

**Re-read vv. 22-25**

**What does it mean that believers are “born again with an imperishable seed”?** *(born again means we are given a new nature; imperishable means our new nature is eternal - we have eternal life; the “seed” is the “living and enduring Word of God” – meaning both the truth of the Gospel, but also the person of Jesus)*

**What motivation does being born again bring for holy living?** *(If our essential nature is changed from a sinful, perishable self to a holy, eternal self, then we must live in accordance with who we are. Or conversely, why would we live according to the ways of our old selves?)*

**Application (Leave 15 min to do this):**

How has your definition or understanding of holiness changed by looking at this passage?

Which motivation is most motivating/meaningful to you and why?

- 1) God is our Father, and He is Holy. He has adopted us as His children; therefore we should imitate Him (vv. 14-16).
- 2) God is our Judge, therefore we should behave in light of the reality that we will give an account of our lives (v.17).
- 3) God expended an infinite cost – the life of His own Son – to redeem us from a life of slavery to sin, therefore we should live with eternal gratitude knowing how valuable we are to God (vv. 18-19).
- 4) God has given us a new nature, therefore we should live in line with who we are, not who we used to be (vv. 22-25).

Peter gives two specific areas of our lives to focus on holiness. The first is in v. 14: “do not be conformed to the former lusts/passions which were yours in your ignorance”. What does he mean by this? (*To not be controlled by the sinful desires of our flesh*) How do you think you can grow in holiness in this area?

The other is in v. 22, where he calls us to “sincerely” and “fervently love one another”. What do you think that looks like? (*It is easy to think of holiness as simply a removal of sin, but the positive aspect of it is “Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12:20). It is almost the opposite of the above. Instead of*

*being controlled by our lusts, we are controlled by our love for one another.*) How do you think you can grow in holiness in this area?

Yet, Peter also exhorts us to “be holy... in ALL your behavior” (v. 15). Is there any other area of your life you feel God calling you to a higher standard of living?

These truths could massively overwhelm and discourage us if we believe that we have the ability to change ourselves to be holy as God calls us to be holy. What needs to happen for us to be able to live “holy” lives? (*There could be many things, but most simply: 1) We must receive Jesus and be “born again”. Without relying fully on Jesus for salvation from our sin and to give us a new heart, we will never be able to change. 2) We must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit for the power to live a holy life. Galatians 3:3 says, “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”*)

Pass out *Satisfied?* booklets to everyone in your study. Explain this is a resource that helps us understand how to live and experience the Christian life in the power God supplies. Ask them to read it sometime this week (or even every day) and you can answer their questions over lunch or next week at study.